

Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Kerala, involving a total amount of Rs. 16978.69 crore, the package aims at establishing a sustainable and viable farming and livelihood support system through debt relief to farmers, improved supply of institutional credit, crop centric approach to agriculture, assured irrigation facilities, watershed management, better extension and farming support services, improved marketing facilities and subsidiary income opportunities through horticulture, livestock, dairying, fisheries, etc.

Increasing investment in agriculture

250. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANABHARTIA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether FAO of the United Nations has called for greater investment in agriculture and policy support for evolving public-private partnership in agriculture as over 854 million people, a large number of them in India itself, are destined to go hungry;

(b) if so, whether according to the report, 40 countries including India are facing food shortage;

(c) if so, whether Government have examined the report; and

(d) the steps Government propose to take to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir. According to FAO report "The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2006", the number of under nourished people in the world is estimated at 854 million people, out of which 212 million people are in India. FAO has also stressed that a model of cooperation between the public and private sectors is evolving and it includes, among other things, the improvement of investment climate of agriculture.

(b) FAO's latest assessment given in the report "Crop Prospects and Food Situation" shows that 39 countries are facing food emergency and require external assistance.

(c) and (d) Some of the major initiatives undertaken by the Government to provide food security to the poor and to enhance investment in the rural sector and also to increase agricultural growth are as follows:

[24 November, 2006]

RAJYASABHA

- * National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) targets employment for at least 100 days to every rural household and provides income security to agricultural workers in lean agricultural season.
- * Bharat Nirman launched in 2005 has been envisaged to improve rural connectivity to promote integrated national market for rural people to be able to meet each other's demand.
- * Provision of minimum nutritional support to the poor through subsidized foodgrains distributed through targeted public distribution system.
- * Efforts are on to turn the focus of commercial banks, regional rural banks and cooperative banks towards providing credit especially production credit to rural and farmers' households at concessional rate of interest.
- * Public-Private partnership is encouraged in the development/strengthening of agricultural marketing infrastructure, grading and standardization.

NCF recommendations

251. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:

SHRIMATI SHOBHANABHARTIA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Commission of Farmers, headed by Dr. M.S. Swaminathan had submitted its final report;

(b) if so, whether the report has suggested for setting up a National Food Security and Sovereignty Board under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister;

(c) the other main points mentioned by the Commission;

(d) by what time a National Policy for Farmers is likely to be approved and announced; and

(e) whether Government would clear Rs. 16978.69 crores relief package for farmers in 31 districts across four States plagued by distress deaths?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
(SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.